Virginia Tech Open Sourcing Announcement of COSMOS Software (October 11, 2005)

Abingdon, Virginia

I am pleased to join with officials from Virginia Tech, the Blacksburg Electronic Village and People, Inc. this morning in making an announcement of significant technological achievement by the university which will now be shared with all of the communities of Southwest Virginia and beyond. Today we announce the release by Virginia Tech of a new software system, the Community Services Management System, commonly known as COSMOS, under an open sourcing licensing agreement through the Blacksburg Electronic Village.

The COSMOS software was developed by Virginia Tech in collaboration with the Washington County Department of Social Services and People, Inc. as a web-based intake, assessment, tracking and referral system to provide specific information to disadvantaged citizens regarding the various human services and assistance available in our region.

In August of 2003, I announced the formation of One Care of Southwest Virginia, Inc. at a Ninth District Health Care Conference which I hosted at the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center in Abingdon. One Care is a non-profit organization comprised of more than 40 public and private health and human service organizations created for the purpose of launching COSMOS on a regional level. The goal of One Care, in providing uniform access to COSMOS to all of the social service agencies in our region is to improve access and efficiency in the provision of needs-based health care and human services to residents of Southwest Virginia who are without health insurance or who are underinsured.

With Virginia Tech's decision to provide an open source licensing agreement for COSMOS, One Care can now begin its work in creating an comprehensive and far-reaching database of information which will enable our disadvantaged residents to tap into the wide range of services and assistance which exists in Southwest Virginia. Once established, citizens in need in Southwest Virginia will have access to a vast network which will provide them, in one stop, with information so that they can easily find the organizations that provide the care and services they need. And as a result, the reach of our region's human service agencies will be broadened, and a higher level of care and assistance will be provided to the disadvantaged citizens in our area.

I'd like to take this opportunity to recognize the outstanding work at Virginia Tech which has made the university a national leader in technology education and development. One of Tech's most prominent accomplishments, and one which is directly related to our announcement today of the open source licensure of COSMOS, was the development of the Blacksburg Electronic Village more than a decade ago. In 1993, when BEV was first launched, the Town of Blacksburg received national and international acclaim for its development as an informational tool which utilized cutting edge technology and was of direct benefit to the Blacksburg community. At my urging, communities across the Ninth District emulated the BEV and launched electronic villages of their own. BEV continues to be an outstanding informational resource for the Town of Blacksburg. It is only fitting that BEV will be used to launch today Virginia Tech's next great contribution to community-based information technology.

I would like to take the opportunity of these remarks to recognize several individuals who have been instrumental in the announcement we are making today.

Rob Goldsmith, Chief Executive Officer of People, Incorporated, and Doug Meade, Director of the Washington County Department of Social Services spearheaded the formation of COSMOS, and I thank them for their enduring commitment to improving the lives of less fortunate Southwest Virginians.

I also want to recognize Judy Lilly, Associate Vice President for Network Infrastructure and Services at Virginia Tech; Luke Ward, Lead Engineer at Virginia Tech in the design and development of the COSMOS software; and Bill Sanders, Director of the Blacksburg Electronic Village; for their work in making COSMOS available under an open source licensing agreement. I thank them for their efforts.

The twelve members of One Care's Board of Directors deserve our recognition today for the time they are volunteering to this enormous and worthy effort.

Finally, I want to thank my District Director, Laura Lee, for her efforts in aid of the One Care project.

The launch of COSMOS under an open source licensing agreement promises to revolutionize the provision of human services to the residents of Southwest Virginia. I thank all of those who are gathered here today who have played a role in this outstanding technological achievement. I'd now like to recognize Dr. Charles Steger, President of Virginia Tech for his remarks.